



Department of
Housing and Public Works

Our Ref: HS 00906-2020

Dear Homelessness and Housing Service Providers

Service integration initiatives responding to COVID-19

We know that there is concerted effort around the State to address the current and emerging needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and vulnerable tenancies in the context of COVID-19.

We commend your efforts in an environment of such uncertainty. The ongoing partnership between the Department of Housing and Public Works and the funded housing and homelessness sector is now more vital than ever as we unite to protect clients and the workforce.

As the full implications of COVID-19 emerge we are writing to you to emphasise existing and emerging groups and structures intended to play a vital and formal role in responding to the needs of individuals and households.

This letter is seeking your agency's active participation in utilising these structures to ensure the safety of vulnerable people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and people whose tenancies may be at risk in the context of COVID-19. Multi-agency collaboration will be supported to ensure that people's needs are addressed and also that the workforce is supported in their essential role at a time of greater uncertainty.

COVID-19 Immediate Response Fund

The Minister for Housing and Public Works has announced a \$24.7 million COVID-19 Immediate Response Fund to deliver enhanced housing and homelessness services to address the immediate needs of vulnerable people raised in our engagement with you.

Please ensure you are in contact with your usual departmental contract managers to understand how this funding is being allocated to respond to the needs of your clients and services, including how you can link with enhanced services or access funding where applicable. The full funding package is explained here. It includes flexible brokerage for bespoke, regional solutions to housing needs. It also includes practical assistance with cleaning and protective equipment responding to the safety needs of front-line staff.

Coordinated Housing and Homelessness Response – Integrating Services

The Queensland Government's *Coordinated Housing and Homelessness Response – Integrating Services* initiative has been operating since 2019 in nine priority locations to better coordinate responses to homelessness and housing need, particularly for people who are sleeping rough.

This strategy includes two key elements:

- Place-Based Response Teams (PBRT) led by Regional Directors and include membership from specialist homelessness services and other organisations involved in delivering services to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. PBRTs are focused on identifying and assisting people who are *rough sleeping* to access housing and other support solutions.



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- Care Coordination Groups assisted by a regional Care Coordination Facilitator bringing government and non-government services together to address the needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and who have complex needs. The Care Coordination Groups are focussed on facilitating multi-agency responses to prevent or resolve homelessness more broadly. They assist people at all levels of homelessness and also work to sustain tenancies.
- Agencies can refer people to the PBRT or case coordination groups and referrals may also flow between both groups depending on the person's assessed needs.

Place-Based Response Teams and Care Coordination Groups will operate in nine locations: Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Sunshine Coast, Moreton, Brisbane, Redlands, Logan and Gold Coast.

Q Shelter is delivering a backbone support to the Care Coordination Groups providing tools, training and resources needed by the sector to successfully integrate housing and support. This initiative is a collective impact model and will be focussed on data capture and evaluation of outcomes.

Our immediate focus: rough sleepers and people in congregate living environments

Place-Based Response Teams, Care Coordination Groups, together with Q Shelter and regional Housing Service Centres will focus their efforts in the short and medium term on addressing the needs of people in primary homelessness and people in congregate living environments to ensure their safety.

This will include working regionally to identify housing solutions and to facilitate people's access to safe accommodation that reduces their vulnerability to infection. Each care coordination meeting will be enabled through Zoom Meeting technology so that participation is safe.

We need your help!

We are writing to you in your capacity as a manager and sector leader to seek your active support for Place-Based Response Teams and Care Coordination Groups. Your help is needed to enable front-line staff to fully participate in Care Coordination Groups by Zoom Meeting technology, and to also join and make appropriate referrals to the PBRT.

We need to work fast to help as many people as possible become as safe as possible in the current circumstances. We can only do this with the involvement of your front-line staff and your commitment as a leader.

Regional contacts and leaders

The attached table sets out key regional contacts and roles to ensure you have all the information you need to join with this initiative. Please encourage appropriate front-line staff to be involved. Links are provided to register interest in participating with more information about meetings to follow.



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Contact

Thank you for your ongoing commitment in such a challenging time. When we emerge from this acute situation, we know there will be much reflection on what has been learned about our collective capacity and capabilities for focused problem solving.

Please contact the Department through your local regional contract managers and Q Shelter through 3831 5900 if you have questions or require further information.

Remain safe and thank you again for your commitment and focus at this time.

Yours sincerely

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